Hard Logic in the Body Shop

Into the steady hiss of the acetylene,
As if to look upon the Gorgon and survive,
The worker in his welder’s helmet leans and stares,
A cautious Perseus, although not unaware
That he can turn the gaseous Medusa off.
Less obvious than rivets, still, his seam will show.
Not at the weld, however, will the metal break,
Suggesting that its weaknesses go through and through,
As weakness of the flesh is said to, by the faint
Who praise the spirit, meaning that the tempting phrase
“Only connect” is of no use in bettering
Society, enough a tangled vipers’ nest
Already. Not to turn to stone one must be blind
Or in the mirror manage not to see the self,
While saving what there is to save, Andromeda
Or just the metal of her chains. Their links restored,
Pause, cut the flame, and lift the visor. Workman, face,
Eyes wide, the ash and smoke of action done: that too
A threat of stone, the Gorgon stare of one's art judged.